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For PRESS RELEASE

The undersigned organizations (the Pèlerin 5 Victims' Union, the International Lawyers Guild (ILG / BAI), the Fraternal Movement for Haitian Liberty and Equality (FMHLE / MOLEGHAF), Haitians Working for Alternative Housing (HWAS / KAYLA), The Youth Solidarity Movement for Another Society (YSMAS / MJSS), CONAMAVIDE, Women's Leadership Organization for the Emancipation and the Development of HAITI (WLOFEDH / OCFEDH), SROD'H) united in promoting respect of fundamental human rights, social justice, and the sovereignty of the Haitian people, vigorously condemn the lack of transparency and the attempts of the Jovenel Moïse administration to sow division in the Pèlerin 5 Victims' Union, uniting the seven impoverished families who were forcibly evicted, then saw their houses in the Pèlerin 5 neighborhood demolished, as part of the Moïse administration's policy of forced eviction of poor people.

On January 11, 2019 the Pèlerin 5 Victims' Union, the International Lawyers' Guild, the Fraternal Movement for Haitian Liberty and Equality (MOLEGHAF), the Haitian Association/Force for Alternative Housing, and the Coordinating Group for the Development of the 15 Blocks of Canaan (CDG 15 / CODE15) held a sit-in in front of the offices of the Public Authority for the Promotion of Public Housing (PAPPH) to commemorate 9 years of failure of government initiatives to provide public housing in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010 and to denounce the policy of forced eviction of poor people by the Moïse administration. During the sit-in, the Director of PAPPH, Yvon Buissereth, requested a meeting with the organizers to discuss their demands – specifically, those relating to the Haitian government's responsibility to provide emergency support for the seven families of Pèlerin 5 who had been brutally evicted from their homes, which were then demolished, in order to expulse them from Jovenel Moïse's neighborhood.

It is worth remembering that on Monday, December 6, 1982, a presidential decree redesignated the National Housing Authority as the Public Authority for the for the Promotion of Public Housing, in recognition of the state's responsibility to improve the quality of life for those in lower socio-economic categories, to identify the housing needs of poor communities, to prepare, program, construct, and manage projects for public housing that benefit low-income families and individuals.

After the Jan. 11, 2019 sit-in, the Director of the PAPPH, Mr. Yvon Buissereth made several trips to Pèlerin 5 over the course of three months (from January to March). During these visits, he met with several victims on the empty lots where their homes once stood and promised them that the Moïse administration planned to reconstruct their homes, but on the condition that the government would first survey the building sites before beginning reconstruction. The leader of the Pèlerin 5 Victims' Union, Marie Madrenette Joseph agreed to this condition, but as a protective measure, she requested that the government sign a formal agreement with the Pèlerin 5 Victims' Union in the presence of their lawyer and of the representatives of the community organizations that have been supporting them in their efforts to ensure respect for the rights of the victims.

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Unfortunately, Mr. Buissereth ended an open discussion of respecting the rights of the victims and, instead, chose to play a game of division and manipulation. The Director of PAPPH, refused to meet with the victims as a group, yet met separately with each of the families and mischaracterized the leader of the Pèlerin 5 Victims' Union of as an obstacle to the reconstruction of their homes. Since she was excluded from the meetings, Marie Madrenette Joseph, the leader of the Pèlerin 5 Victims' Union, distanced herself from the negotiations. Those families who continued the negotiations are still awaiting reparations and the reconstruction of their homes. Fortunately, before long the victims understood that they had been manipulated by the Director of the PAPPH. They are mobilizing to defend their rights by holding a sit-in to protest the dishonest behavior of the PAPPH Director in front of the offices of the PAPPH on Thursday, May 23, in solidarity with the organizations co-signing this press release and accompanied by other concerned citizens.

We, the undersigned organizations, note that nearly 10 months have passed since the night of July 3-4, 2018, when, on orders from the highest levels of the Haitian government, an illegal (according to the Constitution of March 29, 1987) demolition of the homes seven families was conducted. As a consequence of these illegal demolitions of homes that the families had spent many years building, these families are now in an extremely vulnerable situation caused by those who were supposed to be defending their interests. We will continue to call out the individuals and offices that ordered and were present during these brutal actions: the Governmental Commissioner for Port-au-Prince, Ocname Clamé Dameus, Esq., who ordered the execution of this crime and mischaracterized the victims as presenting a danger to the President's family. In truth, the sole reproach that one could make of these families is that were not sufficiently wealthy for Mr. Jovenal Moïse to have as his neighbors. The Secretary for Public Security, Mr. Ronsar Saint-Cyr, was present on the premises to insure the completion of the demolition. The mastermind behind this operation was Yves Leonard, the husband of the Mayor of Tabarre municipality and the owner of the house rented by Jovenal Moïse and his family. Berson Soliour, the Departmental Director for the West for the Haitian National Police (HNP), was also on the premises during the demolitions.

In light of these facts, we openly oppose the nomination of Ocname Clamé Dameus to a judgeship on the Court of Appeals of Gonaïves. We call on the population of Gonaïves to reject the nomination of this thug to such a prestigious position. We interpret Jovenal Moïse's nomination of Ocname Clamé Dameus to this judgeship as follows: 1) Jovenal Moïse is repaying Ocname Clamé Dameus for having ordered the demolition of the victims' homes in order to remove people from his neighborhood; 2) This is a slap in the face of the victims who have been forced into the streets while the executioner is generously rewarded for his crime by Jovenal Moïse.

We strongly condemn the manipulative strategies employed by the Director of the PAPPH to divide the victims. This strategy is best understood as a diversionary tactic used by the Haitian government in order to mislead the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), by using the shield of the Haitian State to avoid criminal responsibility for actions in blatant violation of human rights undertaken for the sole benefit of Jovenal Moïse.

In light of these facts, we demand that the Haitian government agree :

- 1) To meet with the victims as a group in an open and transparent discussion
- 2) To provide urgently-needed support to the victims
- 3) To develop a plan to reimburse the victims, in the presence of their legal counsel and of representatives of the community organizations supporting them, in order to ensure that the process of reparation will be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Human Rights of the victims.

We call on the victims to remain united in opposition to blackmail by those in power since this is not a question of soliciting favors from the powerful. The egregiously brutal actions that occurred in Pèlerin 5 on July 3 and 4, 2018 constitute a crime against humanity. The Haitian government is obliged to respect the rights of its victims by granting them justice and reparation

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Signed by:

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KAYLA